

Dr. Gaurav Krishnamoorthy - Going through a specialty program

Dr. O'Keefe: So today I welcome Dr. Gaurav Krishnamoorthy and he has just completed training to become a specialist in the area of oral and maxillofacial radiology and I got a call that OMR from now on. And I want to know first from you, Gaurav, a little bit about your professional trajectory. Where have you come from? Where do you hope to go?

Krishnamoorthy: Okay. Well thanks for having me. So, my name's Gaurav and I graduated dentistry from McGill University in 2015. Following that I did a year-long residency at the University of Connecticut where I completed my advanced education in general dentistry. I quite liked that and decided to then apply to a specialty program, specifically the University of Toronto and its program in oral and maxillofacial radiology. And so that's where I've been since 2016. I've been there from 2016 till just recently, 2019, just about graduating and hope to continue a career in teaching part-time and mainly private practice and some hospital work as well. So that's, that's a little bit about who I am and where I've come from.

Dr. O'Keefe: Why did you decide to pursue this particular specialty?

Krishnamoorthy: It's fair. To be, to be perfectly honest, I didn't always know, I know a lot of people might already know what they want to do, but I didn't always know quite what I wanted to do. While I was in dental school, prior to dental school, I had some experience at a private practice both in general dentistry and an oral radiology that gave me some exposure to both fields. In dental school I was almost convinced that I didn't want to do oral radiology. I had explored different options and I got some really good advice. I spoke to a lot of my professors. Everyone encouraged me to do a residency and I think that was one of the best things I could have done for myself. While in residency in Connecticut, I had a chance to shadow some of the residents at the University of Connecticut and got an understanding of what it might be to be an oral radiologist.

Krishnamoorthy: I reached out to my former professors, got some advice and then decided to apply to the University of Toronto. And uh, it was really just the fact that you've got all these different specialists and general dentists that kind of all communicate with the same modality, being radiographs, that drew me to it and it was a very interesting and I think fulfilling experience so far.

Dr. O'Keefe: Okay. You're going to pursue this specialty and you're doing a residency in the United States. Did you consider pursuing the specialty training in the United States or did you definitely decide you were going to do it in Canada?

Krishnamoorthy: So, yeah, I looked around and there are a number of schools and maybe when this video comes out there'll be more schools because the number of new

schools opening up in the United States as well. I did my research and decided the University of Toronto was for me the only place that I actually wanted to come to. It was, and it still is, if not the best, the best radiology program in North America and the world, and with some great mentors and instructors, and the method of teaching is quite unique and special; and to that end, I wanted to come back to Canada and work here and so University of Toronto was my top choice and I'm happy that things worked out.

Dr. O'Keefe: Speaking of the great method of teaching at the program, could you paint a picture for me, what's a typical day or week like for a trainee in your specialty in Toronto?

Krishnamoorty: So, it's quite varied as the three-year program progresses. So, at the start it's quite class and didactic based and then towards the end you get a little more time to do research. And it's quite varied and different than dental schools so it is something that you should, at least, if you get a chance to shadow the program you should shadow the program. Mondays, Wednesdays or Thursdays we have what's called seminar in which you are in front of films with your mentors/instructors and you go through cases and you have to learn how the process of reasoning out what the disease or what the actual interpretation is.

Krishnamoorty: In conjunction with that, two days a week you see patients. So, it's not like you don't see patients at all. The dentists and specialists will refer patients to the school, and you will then go acquire the images, interpret them and then continue to write a report for it. You also have classes. So, you have classes in pathology and other parts of dentistry as well as some classes that help you with your research, to fulfil the didactic component of it. You occasionally have to go for rounds to the hospitals. You present at rounds in the faculty. You have classes with other departments. And you also have to do a few presentations over the course of the years that look into the disease mechanisms. So, all that is in conjunction with your day-to-day, which is really a lot of sit in front of a computer and reporting on different types of imaging modalities. And then obviously you get time to conduct research in whatever field interests you. To be honest, it doesn't have to be radiology. So, it's quite a varied experience over the course of three years. Yeah.

Dr. O'Keefe: So, I guess they kept y pretty busy?

Krishnamoorty: Yeah, but it never felt like work. I mean it was work, but it was a, it's, there's a lot of things to learn and there's a lot of things to do, but it's varied enough that it's interesting.

Dr. O'Keefe: Did you get any chance, or maybe you weren't interested, but did get any chance to do practice of dentistry outside, or are we just so focused on the program?

Krishnamoorty: No, I think that the, for two reasons, no, I did not practice outside. I think it's worth it, especially for a field like radiology, to not moonlight or not to do anything outside. I think it's important to kind of devote your time to it. It's a field that is quite distinct from dentistry in that it's, it's a new challenge and so it's very dentistry focused, but at the same time it's a new way of learning and doing things so I think that it would have been disingenuous to both parties had I done either half time. So, I would completely recommend if you're deciding that this is a specialty that you'd like to do to kind of focus your time and spend it doing only this.

Dr. O'Keefe: What did you like best to put your training program?

Krishnamoorty: I really enjoyed the seminars. So that's something that the University of Toronto is kind of unique for. So the method of teaching, although initially daunting is quite rewarding because you're sitting in front of the same images and you—it could be one on one session, it could be you and your colleague and your professor—you're sitting in a room and learning about different diseases and learning about different ways of interpreting the same image.

Krishnamoorty: And that's something that is initially daunting if you come from a school where that's not taught. But, the oral method of teaching and the oral method of feedback is quite useful if you're actually going to progress in this field. And that's probably the one that looking back, I enjoyed the most.

Dr. O'Keefe: Communication skills are incredibly important for, especially for any practitioner, but particularly when you're communicating all the time with patients and with colleagues.

Krishnamoorty: Yeah. Both written verbal and also, I think it's important to know that if you are interested in this program, your ability to use technology and computers is vital. So, it's something that requires a lot of comfort with tech, a lot of comfort with computers as well.

Dr. O'Keefe: What did you like best about your training program to be a specialist?

Krishnamoorty: I think the program in oral radiology is quite unique because although it is dentistry, it's a unique way to look at dentistry. It gave me the opportunity to continue learning. I think that was really great and I think as my career continues, I will continue to learn. It opened new doors in the way of learning about new technologies. Kind of the crux of it all oral radiology is really about being a good dentist and then being able to communicate with other dentists and other specialists about what is going on in the way their radiologic images. So, along with research and teaching, I think doing just oral radiology allows you to explore dentistry from another perspective and another avenue.

Dr. O'Keefe: So, to round the conversation out, have you got some pearls of advice for a colleague who might be thinking of following your path?

Krishnamoorty: Yeah, I think it's important to not really close any doors over the course of your education. I think if you'd asked me a couple of years ago if I wanted to do this, I don't think I would have said yes. So, keep things open. You probably should, if you get a chance to either contact the person that taught you radiology or perhaps more importantly perhaps come and shadow the program and see what it's actually like, and best time to do that would be sort of between March and April. That's when the program has the most ability to actually have you come by. So, if you're gonna email the director, that's probably a good time to do so. And take your time to figure it all out. I didn't know what I wanted to do in dental school. Do a residency if you can. It's worth it, I think, and just make sure that you keep your doors open and if you like something, then pursue it. But it's best to know what you're getting into before you get into it. So, go ahead and shadow somebody.

Dr. O'Keefe: Any final word of advice?

Krishnamoorty: No, I think the radiology community in Canada is quite small as of now. It's a very, very close-knit group. We all relatively know each other and we're all pretty open. So, if your province or city doesn't quite have radiologists, don't hesitate, look us up and reach out to us. If you can make it to Toronto, I would still recommend shadowing the program cause that gives you a sense of what it's actually like. But reach out to us and let us know if you have any questions. And if you feel like you'd like some more information, I'm sure one of us would be more than willing to help you out.

Dr. O'Keefe: Dr. Gaurav Krishnamoorty, thank you very much for your advice.

Krishnamoorty: It's my pleasure, thank you.